

Compulsion

*presents*

CONTRAST

# Part 1: Contrast

*"The interaction is stellar"*

- IGN

*"It's as if Limbo and Bioshock Infinite  
had a baby while watching Pan's Labyrinth"*

- Venturebeat

*"Contrast's unique visual style, original music,  
and innovative gameplay make a compelling  
package for players"*

- GameInformer



# Synopsis

Our story begins in the 1920s, in the bedroom of a little girl. Didi lives with her mother, Kat, and is an independent, adventurous kid. She has an absentee father, and spends a lot of her time daydreaming with her one friend in the world, a young woman named Dawn. Dawn visits Didi from time to time, but usually, only when Didi is alone.

For months, Kat has been working hard to get the headliner gig at the biggest joint in town, the Ghost Note cabaret. Tonight is the big night. It's her one shot, but she can't bring Didi with her.

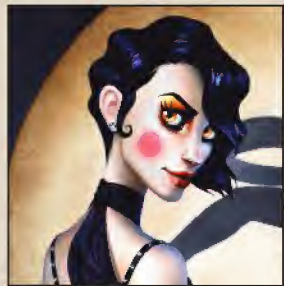
Meanwhile, Kat's ex-partner, Johnny, has come back to town with a grand plan to set up an elaborate circus, and win Kat back. He needs the help of the city's resident magician, the Amazing Vincenzo, to make sure the show goes off without a hitch. Otherwise, Johnny is going to be out of luck and, thanks to some involvement with some nefarious gangsters, possibly out of time.

Kat puts Didi to bed, and heads off to the Ghost Note...





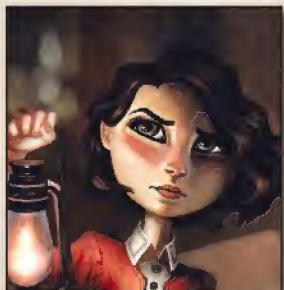
## Dawn



The world of Contrast is viewed through the eyes of Dawn, Didi's best friend. Dawn is a young woman of indeterminate age, at once the most visible yet the most unknown character in Contrast. Living in the shadows, she can pass for one of them, moving between the shaded and lit worlds of Contrast. But, which world is reality?

Played by: **A mystery audience member!**

## Didi



Breaking on to the scene as the chief protagonist, Didi is an independent and crafty 9 year old. In a world of magic, intrigue and deception, Didi's view on the complex adult world is all about keeping it simple - the adults may not be able to get things done because they're too busy thinking about things, but she knows that life isn't about what you can't do; it's about possibilities.

Played by: **Teale Bishopric** (English)

and: **Gabrielle Shulman** (French)

## Kat



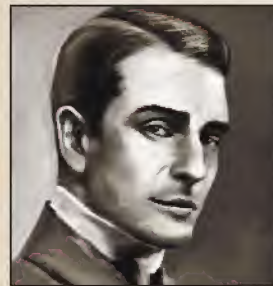
A single mother in a world that doesn't do you any favours, Kat is the star of Contrast's cabaret. A complex and beautiful woman, Kat is used to doing things on her own, including taking care of Didi. However, there are always people around that want to take advantage of her, and sometimes that gets Kat into some bad situations.

Played by: **Vanessa Matsui** (English)

and: **Nathalie Homs** (French)

# CAST

## Johnny



A fly by night confidence man, Johnny is a loveable rogue. Moving from town to town, he's always on the lookout for the next big thing, the next score, and the next opportunity. But, there are parts of his past that he can't run away from, and some he's not even sure he wants to. Each time he tries, he gets drawn back into his old ways, sometimes getting himself and the people around him hurt.

Played by: **Elias Toufexis** (English)

and: **Martial Leminoux** (French)

## Vincenzo



Vincenzo is a man whose name echoes around the room moments before he enters; a man whose reputation is known by everyone who has a business knowing anything. Some say he cavorts with devils. Others laugh and say they're just tricks of light and shadow. But no matter which view they subscribe to, the audiences always flock to see The Amazing Vincenzo!... and boy, does he know it.

Played by: **Bruce Dinsmore** (English)

and: **Louis-Philippe Dandenault** (French)

## The Goons

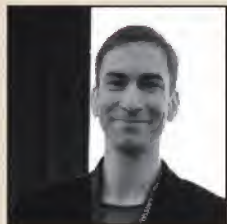


Business is just business. Men like this fill a need; simple businessmen there to offer a helping hand when needed. So what if certain parts of society frown upon them? They frown upon society too, never forget it. And they'll say "don't listen to the rumours, we're stand up guys, we had no part in that nasty business". And it'll be okay, because society will pay them back, won't they?

Played by: **Bruce Dinsmore** (both) (English)  
and: **Louis-Philippe Dandenault** (Salvio) & **Martial Leminoux** (Carmine) (French)

# CREW

## Director - Guillaume Provost



A programmer and free spirit since he was a boy, Guillaume is known for his coffee habit and irreverent views towards the norm. Guillaume came up with the idea to start his own studio based largely on the mechanics that eventually became Contrast, gathering the misfits that accompany him here along the way.

"Thanks to my wonderful kids, who are really awesome! Thanks to my family, friends, the amazing kiwi Sam, etc; I would be completely lost without them (especially Sam)."

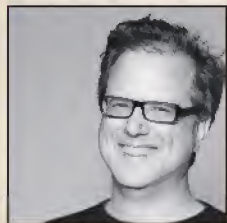
## Producer/Stage Manager - Derek Elliott



Derek is the organisational prodigy behind Contrast and Compulsion. Coming from the big leagues, Derek keeps the rest of us in line with a combination of cross fit and every martial art known to man (except capoeira, which he considers to be a type of dancing and therefore is inappropriate in all circumstances).

"Josh, today you must watch every GTAV video known to man, and you must report back to us without drooling. If you squeal with delight at any point, you must start over. And... go!"

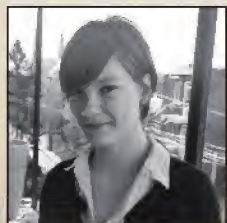
## Screenwriter - Alex Epstein



Alex got his start in the industry writing erotic Twilight fan fiction. Knowing that this was the start of an amazing career, he moved into his own work (including books, films and now videogames), and began work on Contrast thanks to impressing Guillaume with his storytelling at a bar one night.

"I can't believe 50 Shades of Grey had such success. But on the upside, I still have my self-respect and am well regarded in Montreal social circles."

## Visual Designer - Whitney Clayton



Whitney is the artist behind the look of Contrast. Known around the office for such sayings as "oh god her eyes, her eyes, they keep staring at me!", Whitney is a political refugee from the US, making Canada her home for the past 7 years. Likes art, dislikes being mainstream, man!

"Thanks to the Canadian government for letting me stay here! I am trying hard to love poutine! I mean, come on, what more do you want?!"

# CREW

## Choreographer - Sylvia Rack



A native Montrealian, Sylvia delights in in-office gardening, with a herb collection and (we believe) a small carrot farm growing somewhere around her desk. An experienced animator, she has been the only full time animator on the project. Is rumoured to import men from Latin American countries, decrying the local varieties as uncultured.

"I mean, I'm not vegetarian. I just really dig vegetables. Get it? Dig? Hahaha, I'm hilarious."

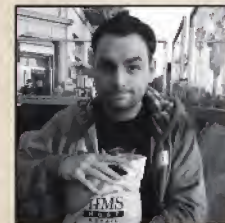
## Tech Guru - Paul-Etienne Bellonck



Coming from the ordered craziness of Japan, PE returned to his native Montreal to work on Contrast. Likes: sushi. Dislikes: hipsters. Thinks Whitney should be deported.

"I'm just not convinced about you. Or your silly hat. Look at my beard, does its fiery ginger-ness look like it's joking?"

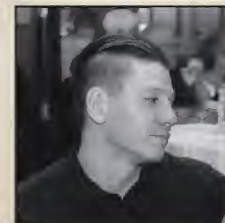
## Set Designer/Magician - Joshua Mills



Coming from Ontario, Josh is behind approximately half of the sets seen in the show. It's said that everything he touches has a little bit of magic in it, leading to the feeling of wonder you will feel when experiencing Contrast. Has a lovely supportive and new wife and a semi-friendly cat, Harold.

"Oh man, marrying Irena was the best decision! I mean, seriously, I know I'm all that, but so is she! Match made in karmic heaven. Also, hi mum! Love, Smallville."

## Set Designer/Puppeteer - Trevor Johnson



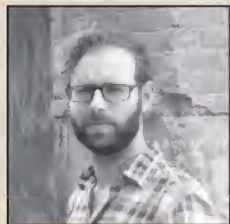
Coming from Manitoba, and now back in Manitoba, Trevor is the long suffering designer behind the other half of the show, and is often seen pulling the strings behind the scenes. Suffers from a fear of having his voice heard in public, despite its rich timbre (stay tuned for the new shadow theatre remix, coming out soon!).

"Guys, stop playing that recording. Please. I am not the narrator from Bastion. Wait, that's not what happened... thanks Becky!"



# CREW

## Evangelist/Holy Man — Sam Abbott



The semi-resident vagrant and imported kiwi, Sam is known for having the most luxurious beard known to man. Some say that he grew it in 7 minutes on Mont Royal, while sheltering seven newborn kittens from a winter storm. Spends all day on facebook and has two degrees collecting dust.

"Have you guys heard about [insert news item here]? It's going to change the world, man."

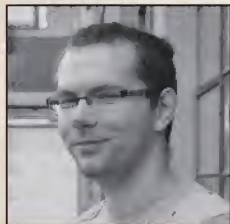
## Anatomically Correct Android — Matt Robinson



Known to most as a cheerful floating head over Skype, Matt completes our programming team. Based in Ontario and recently joining the team, he has also introduced his two cats, Stan and Ollie, bringing mirth and ass shots to our morning meetings.

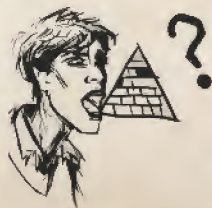
"Honestly, it's like he knows you're there, and is just doing it to spite you. I'm not sorry though, this is hilarious."

## Local Perfectionist — Michel Duguay



Nobody really knows where Michel came from. A local Quebecois, he simply appeared one morning with 4 coffees, and blended seamlessly into the team. Responsible for testing the game and checking that we've done our jobs properly, he never seems tired, probably due to the excessive coffee ingestion.

"As for eating a pyramid, I think I'll pass." (This is the only real quote in this entire section... we still don't know what it means.)



# CREW

## King Adviser — Cord Smith



Known both as a disembodied voice and a larger than life character, Cord is the great Contrast sounding board, and has been... on board... from the very beginning. He's been around so long that the first sets of business cards for everyone all had his email address on them, leading to statements like:

"Guillaume, I just got emailed about your upcoming hair cut appointment, and also by a nice lady who seems quite enamoured with you. We have to get these cards fixed."

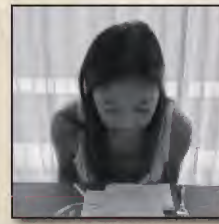
## Audience Counsellor — Ami Blaire



Ami has a small child. She is cute, we hear. We hear she sleeps reasonably well. How she manages that and also helps direct how to make Contrast appealing to audiences is beyond me. Is known for a calm presence on the end of the phone - she's in California.

"Oh she's just great, you know! Bigger every day. What do you mean, talk about Contrast? I have bigger fish to fry, don't I little one?" (Sorry, we'll stop the bad puns now.)

## Socialite/News Spreader — Sonia Im



Lounging near the beaches in LA, Sonia spends most of her time avoiding loud construction sites and catching squirrels. She also knows everyone in the media scene - and is the reason you guys even know about Contrast! Hell of a commute to Montreal.

"It's like... it's like they just wait until I'm on the phone to begin work. I'm going to write to someone. Someone important. They'll see."

Made with Assistance from...



Alex Golebiowski




Chris Iacobucci



"Compulsion lured us to their studio with promises of candy and stardom, and subsequently enslaved us for the length of the production. Forced to work at gunpoint, we are overjoyed by the release of both the game and ourselves." - Alex and Chris

And...

 WAVE GENERATION | AUDIO



Featuring...

Laura Ellis!





# PART2: BEHIND THE SCENES

## Contrast

began, like many other ideas, on the back of a napkin. Guillaume was in a cafe in France, working on some other ideas, when the idea of traversing across a shadow landscape came to him. As a rendering programmer, the idea of using shadows as physical objects formed the beginning of the Contrast idea.



November,  
2010  
No Heat



Guillaume was inspired by the original Portal, a game that reinvigorated the games industry and kick started a renaissance in platforming games. It showed that you didn't need a 40 hour game, and you didn't have to sell a game for \$50. Suddenly, there was room in the industry for the small, for the unique, for the passion projects.

The funny thing about passion is that it's often accompanied by a lot of hard work. A new idea is great, but what are you going to do with it?

The initial plan was that Contrast had to be complete - it had to be more than a mechanic. We wanted the mechanic to work alongside a new, iconic environment, with an unusual narrative, and unique characters. The film noir style seemed to fit shadow gameplay like a glove, and so it formed the basis for all of these ideas.







# Believe

it or not, the scope for working with shadow gameplay is huge. To finish the game in reasonable time, we had to cut down our original ideas significantly, some of which were pretty outrageous. We learned quickly that in indie development, you need to be very aware of your limits.





## A Different Narrative

When we started on Contrast's story, we wanted to do something in keeping with our world, and we didn't want to stray close to (to quote our narrative director Alex) the cliché of "You are the fated scion of the ancient bloodline and only YOU can save the world with the funny name from The Abomination!" It's a powerful theme, but it didn't sound right for the Contrast we wanted to create.



We had a magical mechanic, but we felt that a film noir/20s background meant we could experiment with a real story; something emotionally deeper and personal to us. In Contrast, we explore the idea of fatherhood, and what that means to a little girl (which we felt hadn't been addressed too frequently in gaming). Also, by telling the story of a little girl, the idea of a fantastical imaginary friend was too appealing to pass up (and helpfully explains Dawn's powers... or does it?).

Finally, the narrative links to our mechanic, in that Didi's family secrets are like shadows, ominous and dark until we shine a light on them. We also incorporated classic film noir aspects such as gangsters, femme fatales and shadowy schemes, meaning that the art and narrative have some really nice links between them.





## Music and Sound



The story of Contrast's sound starts with our audio partners, Wave Generation Audio. Contrast's unique and original score and soundscape are all thanks to the love and hard work put in by Nicolas, Michel and Jose. In addition to their awesome sound work, they also helped us to find great local Montreal voice actors and jazz musicians, who all recorded live (this shadow is a shot of our trumpeter at the recording).

We also were very fortunate to work with the lovely Laura Ellis, the vocalist performing in Contrast. She let us use one of her songs on our first trailer, and people loved it so much that we asked her to perform for the game. She very graciously agreed, and we're still so happy that she did, adding a sultry and rich performance to the game.



## Saying Hello: An Indie Journey

One of the biggest flaws of game developers is that we're not great at telling people about our games. We were lucky - when we went on Steam Greenlight, more than 200,000 people came to check us out. We've not forgotten that, so this is a special thank you and shout out to our fans on Greenlight! We've also been to PAX East, E3, Gamescom and PAX Prime, and it was an absolute pleasure meeting so many people and watch so many of you play Contrast. Thank you for the smiles and warm wishes.



We've also been supported by a number of other groups. Our new partners, Focus Home Interactive, have been super supportive, and have helped out hugely on the marketing front. We're also really grateful to the media who have taken an interest in us (eg MusiquePlus, a Quebec TV channel that you can see Guillaume suiting up for), and to the many others who have told people about us (this is Sam playing Contrast on the Sony big screen at Gamescom 2013).





# Characters



# Dawn and Didi





# Dawn

wasn't  
easy.

Initially, our concepts were of a tall, blonde woman who was attractive but not traditional. She looked great, but we realised that she was a bit too realistic, and a little low on character. After the imaginary friend idea took hold, we realised that it might be cool if she looked like an older, mysterious, otherworldly version of Didi... perhaps the kind of woman Didi wanted to grow into. For example, Dawn's hair is a much more adult version of Didi's wavy style.



# Dawn

was also born out of the environment; a magical place for a kid, particularly the Fair. Combined with a love of Tim Burton character design, we developed on the idea of a 1920s circus acrobat. This allowed Dawn to be beautiful but not a sexual object, magical but not ridiculous, and athletic. Acrobats also don't talk. She ended up looking far more ethereal, iconic and appropriate than our initial iterations.









**Our** studio head, Guillaume, was a single dad at the time he came up with the story for Contrast, and wanted to tell the story of an unconventional upbringing, from the perspective of a little girl. The trick was to make her interesting to a predominantly male audience. Inspired by Ofelia from Pan's Labyrinth, Didi became an adventurous, plucky girl, someone who doesn't really see the barriers in life like the rest of us do, but also uses her imagination to escape from reality.



**Didi's** visual design, her room, and her attitude depict a little girl that hasn't had the easiest of upbringings, yet still sees the world through a filter of wonder and excitement. Her iconic elements are her red jacket and her dark, wavy hair, the light that helps Dawn use her powers and her persistently inquisitive and adventurous nature.





**Kat** represents something the gaming world doesn't see too often: a complex female character who is not intended to be a device for our male audience to lust over (sorry, guys!). While her silhouette is based on the famously sexy silhouette of Jessica Rabbit (she is a cabaret singer, after all), we wanted Kat to represent something more complex. Strong for Didi, independent for herself, passionate for her lovers, yet at times vulnerable and alone, Kat is the modern, strong single parent.



Outwardly flashy and confident in style, under the surface is always trying (if not quite succeeding) to make a better life. But, at the same time, he is an example of the loving, if a little absent, second parent. He is the well-meaning, passionate person that tries to do right by people, but sometimes doesn't quite manage it, even though he is willing to sacrifice his own happiness for others' benefit. Johnny is the understudy dad, trying to make it to the big leagues.





**Vincenzo** is style, appearance and arrogance, the quintessential self-centred performer. Visually he is a shark, a harsh caricature; all hard angles, skepticism and authority. Yet, there is something else about him; somewhere under the desire for respect and admiration is a professionalism and dedication, often mistaken for snobbery. He is the reluctant figure, the great magician and the talented escape artist.



**Every** story has to have a bit of dramatic tension and every film noir story needs someone at least a little nefarious. Salvio and Carmine are probably the biggest caricatures of our little group, the muscle and the mouth, with names taken directly from the Godfather ending credits (no really, check it out!). Initially voiced by Alex and Guillaume, we decided that was too much awesome even for our game and went with Bruce.





# The World



## Contrast

didn't begin as a film noir story - the prototype was an alternate reality game, and shadow manipulation was just one of many abilities. The world was an abstract virtual reality; a dreamscape; a reality falling apart, fading memories that you had to recover. As the film noir story took hold, we blended our dreamscape with a vaudevillian 1920s/30s Europe, to create a unique world to tell our story.



This is Didi's world, a depiction of what she understands the world to be.

The world of Contrast, the environment in which Dawn and Didi interact, is a take on that special world that a child naturally inhabits; a world that adults can see through the wonder in a child's eyes. A world that we remember with fondness. It is a land of fragmented reality, isolated beauty, and imagination that is uniquely Didi's and Dawn's.



## Stylization

We wanted to explore the space between dreamscape and reality and challenge the player into questioning whose reality you, as the player, are exploring. Sometimes the world feels like a wondrous place designed by or for a child, and sometimes the world is tangible and dangerous (making you wonder what she is doing there).

We explored surrealism as used throughout 1920s cinema and art to create a world that blurred those lines.



## Lighting

We needed the lighting and shadows to feel just right. The light needed to be warm and welcoming, and the shadows rich and mysterious. Since you play in the shadows, they also had to be clear and approachable. It was a lot of work to find the right balance.





## Bringing our world to life

Two of the unsung heroes of Contrast are Alex and Chris, the team behind our environmental art partners, PixelNAUTS. They took our concepts and created the incredible world that you see in Contrast, and did it all with a smile and only the occasional bout of mockery.





# The Streets

The 20s was full of artistic, imaginative decadence. In Europe at that time, we imagined you would have turn-of-the-century Art Nouveau mixed with the more angular deco. We loved the idea of combining this with the dilapidated architecture and winding alleyways you find in Mediterranean cities like Venice, Lisbon and Barcelona. We were also strongly influenced by the stylistic decisions in German Expressionism - the way they used simplistic, playful shapes to portray buildings and abstract, expressive shadows to convey emotion in the environment.





# Didi's Room



What is family?

A kid's room is a pretty magical place, home to all sorts of adventures, conversations and shadowy dangers. This is Didi's world, and her room is the most direct link between her personality and the world of Contrast.







# JOHNNY'S FAIR







## Shadow Theater





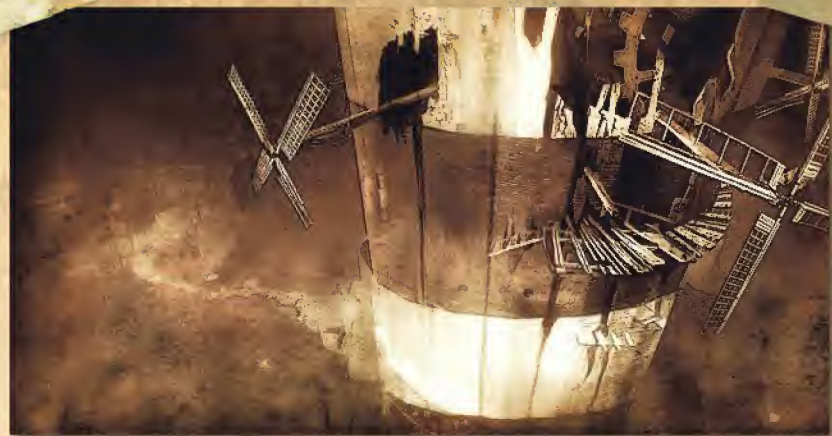
# Vincenzo's Workshop





# Tower

The tower is imposing, and literally towers over the world of Contrast - it's conceivable that it's a pretty important place in the game. We wanted to make sure that it was powerful and evocative, and more surreal, more disjointed, than the rest of the world.



The concept pieces for the tower create perhaps the most unique area in Contrast. In showing people this art, we've found that the tower resonates more than other areas, perhaps because of its inherent otherworldliness, and its fractured, haunting personality.



# Unused Concepts



# Credits

COMPULSION GAMES TEAM. Creative Direction Guillaume Provost  
 Producer Derek Elliott Level Design Trevor Johnson Joshua Mills  
 Programming Paul-Étienne Belloncik Guillaume Provost Matt Robinson Visual  
 Designer Whitney Clayton Animation Sylvia Rack Community Manager Sam  
 Abbott Executive Producers Guillaume Provost Cord Barrett Smith Richard  
 Wu Derek Elliott PARTNERS Level Art -PixelNauts Inc.- Chris Iacobucci,  
 Alex Golebiowski Story & Voice Director, Music Lyricist Alex Epstein  
 Audio Production -WaveGeneration Inc.- David Lipos. Michael Elman. Jose  
 Aguirre. Michel Marchant. Julie Fainer Marc-André Beaudet Lead Composer.  
 Nicolas Marquis Marketing Director Ami Blaire PR Director Sonia Im Post-  
 Production (Trailer) -Ignite Productions- Aladeen Tawfeek Contractors  
 Additional Programming Jacob Barrick. Martin Barrette Additional Design  
 Stuart Wheeler Additional Art Valere Grams. Naeim Khavari. Goran Bukvic.  
 Colin Sayetta. Christopher Bretz. Kay Huang. Glen Harris Ed Hardison. Lui  
 Francisco. WM Michael Irwin. Gabriel Lopez. Evan Yovanovich Additional  
 Animation Brent George. Matt Twigg. Greg Puzniak. Alexandre Roche. Brian  
 Sinasac. Blake Piebenga, Waterproof Studios. Quality Assurance Michel  
 Duguay. FX Art Weili Huang Music Vocals Laura Ellis Voice Acting (English)  
 Didi - Teale Bishopric. Kat - Vanessa Matsui. Johnny - Elias Toufexis.  
 Vincenzo - Bruce Dinsmore. Carmine/Salvio - Bruce Dinsmore. Voice  
 Acting (French) Didi - Gabrielle Shulman. Kat - Nathalie Homs. Johnny -  
 Martial Leminoux. Vincenzo - Louis-Philippe Dandenault. Carmine - Martial  
 Leminoux. Salvio - Louis-Philippe Dandenault. Translation (French). David  
 Martel. Translation (Italian) Angela Paoletti. Translation (German) Güven  
 Altun Translation (Spanish) Josué Monchan Proofreading and Additional DA  
 (French) Words of Magic Additional recordings (French) La Marque Rose  
 Epic Joe Kreiner Special Thanks David M. Cobbs. Richard Hilmer. François  
 Bertrand. Matt Shores. François Provost. Bruno Légaré. Philipp Park.  
 Laura Ellis. Matt Parker. Marie-France Côté. David Sears. Joe Andral.  
 Accounting Becchen Produced with the Financial Support of The Canadian  
 Media Fund. Unreal Engine, Copyright 1998 - 2013, Epic Games, Inc. All  
 rights reserved. FOCUS HOME INTERACTIVE Monsieur Loyal. Cédric Lagarrigue  
 Illusionists. Thomas Barrau. Anne-Sophie Vernhes. Tristan Hauvette. Xavier  
 Assémat. Adrien Rotondo. Sandra Mauri. Thibault Chuffart. Thomas Corbino.  
 Amance Chaidron Fire Eatérs. Luc Heninger. Mohad Senglali. Nathalie Phung.  
 Thierry Ching. Florent D'Hervé. Théophile Gaudron. Pierre Del Grosso.  
 Mickaël Garimé Contortionists. Ugo Ribaud. Xavier Sanson. Marie-Thérèse  
 Nguyen. Christopher Pierron. Pierre Chiron. Paul Fiat. Jérémie Forêt. Jean-  
 Michel Comtois. Nicolas Cheng. Guillaume Collin. Kevin Moutou. Alexandre  
 Kapusta. Rémi Legibre Critic. Marie-Caroline Le Vacon. Investors. John  
 Bert. Aurélie Rodrigues. Aline Janzekovic. Vincent Chataignier. Yann  
 Le Guellaut. Stéphanie Olbé. Vincent Duhnen. Light designers. François  
 Weytens. Diane Dufraisay-Couraud. Manon Lestrade. Magicians. Stéphan Le  
 Gac Savoye. Camille Lallement. Orchestra. Jean-Michel Hellendorff. Damien  
 Duca. Dimitri Robert. Acrobats. Jean-Joseph Garcia. Gildas Souka. Aurélien  
 Clou. Ticket office. Nathalie Jérémie. Adrien Bro. Florette Nsele. Stéphane  
 Figon. Maureen Bolger. Areski Ouazir. Lasconie Lukusa M. Alison Cyrille.  
 Juggler. Deborah Bellangé. Trainer. Jean-Pierre Bourdon



FIN

